



A faint, large watermark of a classical building, possibly a temple or church, with multiple columns and a triangular pediment, is visible across the entire page.

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Selections from the
Writings of Marie
Corelli

The Beauties of Marie Corelli



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The Beauties of Marie Corelli

A ROM-
ANCE OF
TWO
WORLDS

Lent, not
given

YOURS? Why, what can you really call your own? Every talent you have, every breath you draw, every drop of blood flowing in your veins, is lent to you only; you must pay it all back. And as far as the arts go, it is a bad sign of poet, painter, or musician, who is arrogant enough to call his work his own. It never was his, and never will be. It is planned by a higher intelligence than his, only he happens to be the hired labourer chosen to carry out the conception; a sort of mechanic in whom boastfulness looks absurd; as absurd as if one of the stonemasons working at the cornice of a cathedral were to vaunt himself as the designer of the whole edifice. And when a work, any

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Human
reason

work, is completed, it passes out of the labourer's hands; it belongs to the age and the people for whom it was accomplished, and, if deserving, goes on belonging to future ages and future peoples.

DOUBT is the destroyer of beauty —the poison in the sweet cup of existence—the curse which mankind have brought on themselves. Avoid it as you would the plague.

Believe in anything or everything miraculous and glorious—the utmost reach of your faith can with difficulty grasp the magnetic reality and perfection of everything you can see, desire, or imagine. Mistrust that volatile thing called Human Reason, which is merely a name for whatever opinion we happen to adopt for the time—it is a thing which totters on its throne in a fit of rage or despair—there is nothing infinite about it. Guide yourself by the delicate Spiritual Instinct within you, which tells you that with God all things are possible, save that He cannot destroy Himself or lessen by one spark the fiery brilliancy of

His ever-widening circle of productive Intelligence.

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TWO
WORLDS

True
characters

I PERCEIVE with almost cruel suddenness the true characters of all those whom I meet. No smile of lip or eye can delude me into accepting mere surface matter for real depth, and it is intensely painful for me to be forced to behold hypocrisy in the expression of the apparently devout—sensuality in the face of some radiantly beautiful and popular woman—vice under the mask of virtue—self-interest in the guise of friendship,—and spite and malice springing up like a poisonous undergrowth beneath the words of elegant flattery or dainty compliment.

THE fatal finger of the electric instinct within me points out unerringly the flaw in every human diamond, and writes Sham across many a cunningly contrived imitation of intelligence and goodness.

The fatal
finger

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Is it sense

IS it sense to imagine that the immense machinery of the Universe has been set in motion for nothing? Is it even common reason to consider that the soul of man, with all its high musings, its dreams of unseen glory, its longings after the Infinite, is a mere useless vapour, or a set of shifting molecules in a perishable brain? The mere fact of the existence of a desire clearly indicates an equally existing capacity for the gratification of that desire; therefore I ask, would the wish for a future state of being, which is secretly felt by every one of us, have been permitted to find a place in our natures, if there were no possible means of granting it?

Why all this discontent with the present—why all this universal complaint and despair and world-weariness if there be no hereafter?

Arbiters of
our own
fate

WE are the arbiters of our own fate, and that fact is the most important one of our lives. Our Will is positively unfettered; it is a rudder

put freely into our hands, and with it we can steer wherever we choose. God will not compel our love or obedience. We must ourselves desire to love and obey—desire it above all things in the world.

PHYSICIANS are very clever, and estimable men, and there are a few things which come within the limit of their treatment; but there are also other things which baffle their utmost profundity of knowledge. One of these is that wondrous piece of human machinery, the nervous system; that intricate and delicate network of fine threads—electric wires on which run the messages of thought, impulse, affection, emotion. If these threads or wires become, from any subtle cause, entangled, the skill of the mere medical practitioner is of no avail to undo the injurious knot, or to unravel the confused skein. The drugs generally used in such cases are, for the most part, repellant to the human blood and natural instinct, therefore they are always dangerous, and often deadly.

The
nervous
system

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WORLDS

Art

THOSE who adopt any art as a means of livelihood begin the world heavily handicapped—weighted down, as it were, in the race for fortune. The following of art is a very different thing to the following of trade or mercantile business. In buying or selling, in undertaking the work of import or export, a good head for figures, and an average quantity of shrewd common-sense, are all that is necessary in order to win a fair share of success. But in the finer occupations, whose results are found in sculpture, painting, music, and poetry, demands are made upon the imagination, the emotions, the entire spiritual susceptibility of man. The most delicate fibres of the brain are taxed ; the subtle inner workings of thought are brought into active play ; and the temperament becomes daily and hourly more finely strung, more sensitive, more keenly alive to every passing sensation :—The men and women I speak of as Artists are those who work day and night to attain even a small degree of perfection, and who are never satisfied with their own best efforts.

MATERIALISM does not, and can never still the hunger of the Immortal Spirit in man for those things divine, which are, by right, its heritage. Nothing on earth can soothe or console it—nothing temporal can long delight it—in time the best gifts the world can offer seem valueless; for while one spark of God's own essence remains alit within us, it is impossible that here, on this limited plane of thought and action, we should ever be satisfied.

It is those who feel the quick stirrings of a larger, grander life within them—who realise with love and eagerness the wonders of the world to come, and who gaze appealingly across the darkness of present things, striving to see, no matter how indistinctly, the first faint glimmer of the brightness that glitters beyond the grave—to these I speak inadequately and feebly I know, yet with all my soul desiring to cheer them, as they climb from steep to steep of high thought, and noble endeavour, onward and upward.

The Beauties of

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Spiritual
progress

The inner
self

TRUE Spiritual progress and knowledge are shown in the cheerful, sincere, and wholesome life of the person possessing it, and in the encouraging and ennobling influence that life has on the lives of others. Moreover, it is displayed in the buoyancy and tireless energy of the body, in which the beautiful, expanding, highly destined spirit is for a time bidden to work—the absence of all depression, the contentment and tranquillity of the disposition and temper.

THE people taken *en masse* are never brought to realise the fact of the imperishable inner self within each one of them—that actual self which claims as much and more sustenance than the outer body on which we spend such a superabundance of care—care which avails nothing at death, while the attention bestowed on the deathless part of us avails everything.

I KNOW that men and women of to-day must have proofs, or what they are willing to accept as

No proofs

proofs, before they will credit anything that purports to be of a spiritual tendency;—something startling—some miracle of a stupendous nature, such as, according to prophecy, they are all unfit to receive. Few will admit the subtle influence and incontestable, though mysterious, authority exercised upon their lives by higher intelligences than their own—intelligences unseen, unknown, but felt. Yes! felt by the most careless, the most cynical; in the uncomfortable prescience of danger, the inner forebodings of guilt—the moral and mental torture endured by those who fight a protracted battle to gain the hardly-won victory in themselves of right over wrong—in the thousand and one sudden appeals made without warning to that compass of a man's life, Conscience—and in those brilliant and startling impulses of generosity, bravery, and self-sacrifice which carry us on, heedless of consequences, to the performance of great and noble deeds, whose fame makes the whole world one resounding echo of glory—deeds that we wonder at ourselves even in the

performance of them—acts of heroism in which mere life goes for nothing, and the Soul for a brief space is pre-eminent, obeying blindly the guiding influence of a something to itself, yet higher in the realms of Thought.

There are no proofs as to why such things should be; but that they are, is indubitable. The miracles enacted now are silent ones, and are worked in the heart and mind of man alone.

Compen-
sations

To have the serene sublimity of the God-man Christ; and consent to be crucified by a gibing world that was fated to be afterwards civilised and dominated by His teachings, what can be more glorious? To have the magnificent versatility of a Shakespeare, who was scarcely recognised in his own day, but whose gifts were so vast and various that the silly multitudes wrangle over his very identity and the authenticity of his plays to this hour—what can be more triumphant? To know that one's own soul can, if strengthened and encouraged by the force of will, rise to a supreme attitude of power—is not that

sufficient to compensate for the little whining cries of the common herd of men and women who have forgotten whether they ever had a spiritual spark in them, and who, straining up to see the light of genius that burns too fiercely for their earth-dimmed eyes, exclaim : "We see nothing, therefore there can be nothing." Ah, "the knowledge of one's own inner Self-Existence is a knowledge surpassing all the marvels of art and science!"

IN this world there are no two natures alike, yet all are born with a small portion of Divinity within them, which we call the Soul. It is a mere spark smouldering in the centre of the weight of clay with which we are encumbered, yet it is there. Now this particular germ or seed can be cultivated if we WILL—that is, if we desire and insist on its growth. As a child's taste for art or learning can be educated into high capabilities for the future, so can the human Soul be educated into so high, so supreme an attainment, that no merely mortal standard of measurement can reach its

What all
are born
with

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magnificence. With much more than half the inhabitants of the globe, this germ of immortality remains always a germ, never sprouting, overlaid and weighted down by the lymphatic laziness and materialistic propensities of its shell or husk—the body.

Life is
heroism

ANY one can die. A murderer has moral force enough to jeer at his hangman. It is very easy to draw the last breath. It can be accomplished successfully by a child or a warrior. One pang of far less anguish than the toothache, and all is over. There is nothing heroic about it, I assure you! It is as common as going to bed; it is almost prosy. Life is heroism, if you like; but death is a mere cessation of business. And to make a rapid and rude exit off the stage before the prompter gives the sign is always, to say the least of it, ungraceful. Act the part out, no matter how bad the play.

DO you deem women all alike—all on one common level, fit for nothing but to be the toys or

drudges of men? Can you not realise that there are some among them who despise the inanities of everyday life—who care nothing for the routine of society, and whose hearts are filled with cravings that no mere human love or life can satisfy? Yes—even weak women are capable of greatness; and if we do sometimes dream of what we cannot accomplish through lack of the physical force necessary for large achievements, that is not our fault but our misfortune. We did not create ourselves. We did not ask to be born with the over-sensitiveness, the fatal delicacy, the highly-strung nervousness of the feminine nature.

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TWO
WORLDS

Women

EACH circumstance that happens to each one of us brings its own special lesson and meaning—forms a link, or part of a link, in the chain of our existence. It seems nothing to you that you walk down a particular street at a particular hour, and yet that slight action of yours may lead to a result you wot not of. “Accept the hint of each new

Circum-
stance

A ROM.
ANCE OF
TWO
WORLDS

experience," says the American imitator of Plato—Emerson. If this advice is faithfully followed, we all have enough to occupy us busily from the cradle to the grave.



ARDATH
Silence

IHAVE kept silence so long! You know what it is in the world,—one must always keep silence, always shut in one's grief and force a smile, in company with the rest of the tormented forced-smiling crowd. We can never be ourselves—our veritable selves—for if we were, the air would resound with our ceaseless lamentations! It is horrible to think of all the pent-up sufferings of humanity—all the inconceivably hideous agonies that remain for ever dumb and unrevealed!

THE doubter and opposer of God, is also the doubter and opposer of his own well-being. Let this unnatural and useless combat of Human

Reason against Divine Instinct cease within you. Freedom! By the Gods, 'tis a delusive word embodying a vain idea! Where is there any freedom in life? All of us are bound in chains and restricted in one way or the other,—the man who deems himself politically free is a slave to the multitude and his own ambition,—while he who shakes himself loose from the trammels of custom and creed, becomes the tortured bondsman of desire, tied fast with bruising cords to the rack of his own unbridled sense and appetite. There is no such thing as freedom, my friend, unless haply it may be found in death!

ARDATH

Freedom

THE rude licentiousness of an uncultivated boor has its safety-valve in disgust and satiety,—but the soft, enervating sensualism of a trained and cultured epicurean aristocrat is a moral poison whose effects are so insidious as to be scarcely felt till all the native nobility of character has withered, and nought is left but the shadow-wreck of his former self.

The
Epicurean

ARDATH

Meaning of
love

WE men have yet to learn the true meaning of love. We consider it from the selfish standpoint of our own unbridled passions,—we willingly accept a fair face as the visible reflex of a fair soul, and nine times out of ten we are utterly mistaken! We begin wrongly, and we therefore end miserably;—we should love a woman for what she is, and not for what she appears to be. Yet, how are we to fathom her nature?—how shall we guess,—how can we decide? Are we fooled by an evil fate?—or do we, in our lives and marriages, deliberately fool ourselves?

Free Will

IF you voluntarily choose evil, not all the forces in the world can lift you into good,—if you voluntarily choose danger, not all the gods can bring you into safety!

Free Will is the divine condition attached to human life, and each man by thought, word, and deed, determines his own fate, and decides his own future!

SCIENCE somewhat resembles a straight line drawn clear across country, but leading, alas! to an ocean wherein all landmarks are lost and swallowed up in blankness. Over and over again the human race has trodden the same pathway of research,—over and over again has it stood bewildered and baffled on the shores of the same vast sea,—the most marvellous discoveries are after all mere child's play compared to the tremendous secrets that must remain for ever unrevealed ; and the poor and trifling comprehension of things that we, after a lifetime of study, succeed in attaining, is only just sufficient to add to our already burdened existence, the undesirable clogs of discontent and disappointed endeavour. We die,—in almost as much ignorance as we were born,—and when we come face to face with the Last Dark Mystery, what shall our little wisdom profit us ?

A BUDDING republican ! thought Theos. That is how the "liberty, equality, fraternity" system always begins,—first among street-

ARDATH

Science

A budding
Republican

ARDATH

boys who think they ought to be gentlemen,—then among shopkeepers who persuade themselves that they deserve to be peers—then comes a time of topsy-turvydom and fierce contention, and by and by everything gets shaken together again in the form of a Republic, wherein the street-boys and shopkeepers are not a whit better off than they were under a monarchy—they become neither peers nor gentlemen, but stay exactly in their original places, with the disadvantage of finding their trade decidedly damaged by the change that has occurred in the national economy! Strange that the inhabitants of this world should make such a fuss about resisting tyranny and oppression, when each particular individual man, by custom and usage, tyrannises over and oppresses his fellow-man to an extent that would be simply impossible to the fiercest king.

Pent-up
woe

SUPPRESSED sorrow is hardest to endure, and when grief once finds apt utterance,'tis already half consoled! So should the world's great

singers tenderly proclaim the world's most speechless miseries, and who knows but vexed Creation, being thus relieved of pent-up woe, may not take new heart of grace and comfort ?

ARDATH

"ONLY" for the sake of custom !

Nay, custom should be surely classified as an exceeding powerful god, inasmuch as it rules all things, from the cut of our clothes to the form of our creeds ! And he who despises custom becomes an alien from his kind,—a moral leper among the pure and clean. O say rather a lion among sheep, a giant among pygmies ! For, by my soul, a man who had the courage to scorn custom, and set the small hypocrisies of society at defiance, would be a glorious hero !—a warrior of strange integrity whom it would be well worth travelling miles to see !

Custom

METHINKS those who are best beloved of the gods are chosen first to die. Death is not difficult,—but to live long enough for life to lose all savour, and love to lose all charm,

Long life

ARDATH

—this is a bitterness that comes with years and cannot be consoled.

After death

AND this would end for ever my mistakes and follies—and I should perchance discover the small hidden secret of things—the little simple unguessed clue, that would unravel the mystery and meaning of Existence! For can it be that the majestic marvel of created Nature is purposeless in its design?—that we are doomed to think thoughts which can never be realised?—to dream dreams that perish in the dreaming?—to build up hopes without foundation?—to call upon God when there is no God?—to long for Heaven when there is no Heaven? Ah no,—surely we are not the mere fools and dupes of Time,—surely there is some Eternal Beyond which is not Annihilation,—some greater, vaster sphere of soul-development, where we shall find all that we have missed on earth!

THERE are others who are only happy in the pursuit of wisdom, and the more they learn, the more

they seek to know. One wonders,—one cannot help wondering,—are their aspirations all in vain?—and will the grave seal down their hopes for ever?—However great may be the imagination and fervour of a poet, for instance, he never is able wholly to utter his thoughts. Half of them remain in embryo, like buds of flowers that never come to bloom,—yet they are there, burning in the brain, and seeming too vast of conception to syllable themselves into the common speech of mortals! I have often marvelled why such ideas suggest themselves at all, as they can neither be written nor spoken, unless—unless indeed they are to be received as hints,—foreshadowings—of greater works destined for our accomplishment,—hereafter!

GOOD women dislike flattery, while bad ones court it.

IT needs something more than the “moral” sense to rightly ennable man,—it needs the spiritual sense;—the fostering of the instinctive Immortal Aspirations of the creature, to

ARDATH

Thoughts in
embryo

Flattery

Spiritual
sense

ARDATH

make him comprehend the responsibility of his present life, as a preparation for his higher and better destiny. The cultured, the scholarly, the ultra-refined, may live well and uprightly by the "moral sense,"—if they so choose, provided they have some great ideal to measure themselves by,—but even these without faith in God, may sometimes slip, and fall into deeper depths of ruin than they dreamed of, when self-centred on those heights of virtue where they fancied themselves exempt from danger.

Wrong and
right

WE men are cast, as it were, between two swift currents, Wrong and Right,—Self and God,—and it seems more easy to shut our eyes and drift into Self and Wrong, than to strike out brave arms, and swim, despite all difficulty, towards God and Right, yet if we once take the latter course, we shall find it the most natural and the least fatiguing. And with every separate stroke of high endeavour we carry others with us,—we raise our race,—we bear it onward,—upward! And the true

ARDATH

reward, or best result, of fame is, that having succeeded in winning brief attention from the multitude, a man may be able to pronounce one of God's lightning-messages of inspired Truth plainly to them, while they are yet willing to stand and listen. This momentary hearing from the people is, as I take it, the sole reward any writer can dare to hope for,—and, when he obtains it, he should remember that his audience remains with him but a very short while,—so that it is his duty to see that he employs his chance well, not to win applause for himself, but to cheer and lift others to noble thought, and still more noble fulfilment.

THE heart-whole appreciation of the million is by no means so "vulgar" as it is frequently considered,—it is the impulsive response of those who, not being bound hand and foot by any special fetters of thought or prejudice, express what they instinctively feel to be true. You cannot force those "Vulgar" by any amount of "societies" to adopt Browning as a household god—but they will appro-

Popular
applause

ARDATH

priate Shakespeare and glory in him too, without any one's compulsion. If authors, painters, and musicians would probe more earnestly than they do to the core of this instinctive higher aspiration of peoples, it would be all the better for their future fame. For each human unit in a nation has its great as well as base passions,—and it is the clear duty of all votaries of art to appeal to and support the noblest side of nature only,—moreover to do so, with a simple, unforced, yet graphic eloquence of meaning that can be grasped equally and at once by both the humble and exalted.

Music

MUSIC is distinctly the language of the emotions.

Thought
and
expression

A GREAT thought leaps into the brain like a lightning-flash;—there it is, an indescribable mystery, warning the soul and pervading the intellect,—but the proper expression of that thought is a matter of the deepest anxiety to the true poet, who, if he be worthy of his vocation, is bound not only to proclaim it to the world

clearly, but also clad in such a perfection of wording that it shall chime on men's ears with a musical sound as of purest golden bells.

ARDATH

MAN has no enemy save that which is within him, and that the pride of a rebellious Will is the parent Sin from which all others are generated. The old scriptural saying is true for all time, that through pride the angels fell ;—and it is only through humility that they will ever rise again. Pride! the proud Will that is left free by Divine Law, to work for itself and answer for itself, and wreak upon its own head the punishment of its own errors,—the Will that once voluntarily crushed down in the dust at the Cross of Christ, with these words truly drawn from the depths of penitence, “Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt !” is straightway lifted up from its humiliation, a supreme stately Force, resistless, miraculous, world-commanding ; —smoothing the way for all greatness and all goodness, and guiding the happy soul from joy to joy, from glory to glory, till Heaven itself is reached,

The parent
Sin

ARDATH

and the perfection of all love and life begins. For true humility is not slavish, as some people imagine, but rather royal! — since, while acknowledging the supremacy of God, it claims close kindred with Him, and is at once invested with all the diviner virtues. Fame and wealth, the two perishable prizes for which men struggle with one another in ceaseless and cruel combat, bring no absolute satisfaction in the end—they are toys that please for a time and then grow wearisome. But the conquering of Self is a battle in which each fresh victory bestows a deeper content, a larger happiness, a more perfect peace,—and neither poverty, sickness, nor misfortune can quench the courage or abate the ardour of the warrior who is absorbed in a crusade against his own worst passions.

Egotism

Egotism is the vice of this age,—the maxim of modern society is, “each man for himself and no one for his neighbour,”—and in such a state of things, when personal interest or advantage is the chief boon desired, we cannot look for honesty in either religion, politics, or commerce. Nor can

ARDATH

Mammon-worship

we expect any grand work to be done in art or literature. When pictures are painted and books are written for money only,—when labourers take no pleasure in labour save for the wage it brings,—when no real enthusiasm is shown in anything except the accumulation of wealth,—and when all the finer sentiments and nobler instincts of men are made subject to Mammon-worship, is any one so mad and blind as to think that good can come of it?— Nothing but evil upon evil can accrue from such a system; and those who have prophetic eyes to see through the veil of events, can perceive even now the not far distant end, namely, the ruin of the country that has permitted itself to degenerate into a mere nation of shopkeepers, and something worse than ruin,—degradation!



IN this world no one, however harmless, is allowed to continue happy. Fate—or caprice—cannot endure to see us monotonously at rest. Some-

VEN-DETNA

The Beauties of

VEN-
DETTA

thing perfectly trivial—a look, a word, a touch, and lo ! a long chain of old associations is broken asunder, and the peace we deemed so deep and lasting is finally interrupted.

Southern
races

WE love, we desire, we possess ; and then ? We tire, you say ? These Southern races are so fickle ! All wrong—we are less tired than you deem. And do not Englishmen tire ? Have they no secret ennui at times when sitting in the chimney nook of “home, sweet home,” with their fat wives and ever-spreading families ? Truly, yes ! But they are too cautious to say so.

The tricks
of women

ALL men past the age of twenty have learnt somewhat of the tricks of women—the pretty, playful nothings that weaken the will and sap the force of the strongest hero.

Our best
friends

WE are never grateful enough to the candid persons who wake us from our dreams—yet such are in truth our best friends, could we but realise it.

VEN-
DETTAModern
labour

THE fault of all modern labour lies in the fact that there is no heart in anything we do,—we seldom love our work for work's sake,—we perform it solely for what we can get by it. Therein lies the secret of failure. Friends will scarcely serve each other unless they can also serve their own interests,—true, there are exceptions to this rule, but they are deemed fools for their pains.

The song of
the birds

A SHOWER of melody rained from the trees on every side—the pure, sweet, passionate tones pierced the ear like the repeated chime of little golden bells—the beautiful, the tender, the God-inspired birds sang their love stories simply and with perfect rapture—love stories untainted by hypocrisy—unsullied by crime—different, ah! so very different from the love stories of selfish humanity! The exquisite poetic idyll of a bird's life and love—is it not a thing to put us inferior creatures to shame? . . . for are we ever as true to our vows as the lark to his mate? . . . are we as

VEN.
DETTA

sincere in our thanksgiving for the sunlight as the merry robin who sings as blithely in the winter snow as in the flower-filled mornings of spring? Nay, not we! Our existence is but one long impotent protest against God, combined with an insatiate desire to get the better of one another in the struggle for base coin!

A friendly
cheat

I HEAR a good deal of the "plain blunt honesty" of the English, . . . I daresay there is some truth in it, but for my own part I would rather be cheated by a friendly fellow, who gives you a cheery word and a bright look, than receive exact value for my money from the "plain blunt" boor who seldom has the common politeness to wish you a good-day.

The lie that
saves

GOOD-HEARTED, merry rogue! His ideas of right and wrong were oddly mixed—yet his lies were better than many truths told us by our candid friends—and you may be certain the great Recording Angel knows the difference between a lie

that saves and a truth that kills, and metes out Heaven's reward or punishment accordingly.

VEN-
DETNA

FRANCE is unvirtuous enough, God knows, yet there is a sunny smile on her lips that cheers the heart. Italy is also unvirtuous, yet her voice is full of bird-like melody, and her face is a dream of perfect poetry! But England unvirtuous, will be like a cautiously calculating, somewhat shrewish matron, possessed of unnatural and unbecoming friskiness, without either laugh, or song, or smile —her one god, Gold, and her one commandment, the suggested eleventh, “Thou shalt not be found out!”

England
unvirtuous

GOLD, gold for ever! what will it not do! It will bring the proud to their knees, it will force the obstinate to servile compliance, it will conquer aversion and prejudice. The world is a slave to its yellow glitter, and the love of woman, that perishable article of commerce, is ever at its command.

Gold

VEN-
DETTAWoman's
talk

Womanhood

A WOMAN talks as a brook babbles; pleasantly, but without depth. Her information is generally of the most surface kind,—she skims the cream off each item of news, and serves it up to you in her own fashion, caring little whether it be correct or the reverse. And the more vivaciously she talks, the more likely she is to be dangerously insincere and cold-hearted, for the very sharpness of her wit is apt to spoil the more delicate perceptions of her nature.

S HE would have grown to womanhood,—what then? What is the usual fate that falls to even the best women? Sorrow, pain, and petty worry, unsatisfied longings, incomplete aims, the disappointment of an imperfect and fettered life—for say what you will to the contrary, woman's inferiority to man, her physical weakness, her inability to accomplish any great thing for the welfare of the world in which she lives, will always make her more or less an object of pity. If good, she needs all the tenderness, support, and chivalrous guidance

of her master, man,—if bad, she merits what she receives, his pitiless disdain and measureless contempt.

VEN-
DETTA

MAN'S duplicity may succeed in withholding a truth for a time, but in the end it must win its way. Once resolve, and then determine to carry out that resolve, and it is astonishing to note with what marvellous ease everything makes way for you, provided there be no innate weakness in yourself which causes you to hesitate.

Resolution

OGGÌ! Oggi!" is their cry,—to-day, to-day! Never mind what happened yesterday, or what will happen to-morrow,—leave that to i Signori Santi and la Signora Madonna! And after all there is a grain of reason in their folly, for many of the bitterest miseries of man grow out of a fatal habit of looking back or looking forward, and of never living actually in the full-faced present.

To-day!

MERE beauty of face and form can be bought as easily as one buys a flower,—but the loyal heart,

Mere
beauty

VEN-
DETTA

the pure soul, the lofty intelligence which can make of woman an angel—these are unpurchasable ware, and seldom fall to the lot of man. For beauty, though so perishable, is a snare to us all—it maddens our blood in spite of ourselves, . . . we men are made so.

Wicked
women

THREE is a weak point in the strongest of us, and wicked women know well where we are most vulnerable. One dainty pin-prick well aimed—and all the barriers of caution and reserve are broken down—we are ready to fling away our souls for a smile or a kiss. Surely at the last day when we are judged,—and maybe condemned,—we can make our last excuse to the Creator in the words of the first misguided man : “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me,—she tempted me, and I did eat !”

Equality

“**I**T is an impossible dream,” he said, in reply to the remarks of Gualdro and Satustri, “that idea of all men fraternising together in one common pig-stye of equality. Look

at the differences of caste! Birth, breeding, and education make of man that high-mettled, sensitive animal known as gentleman, and not all the socialistic theories in the world can force him down on the same level with the rough boor, whose flat nose and coarse features announce him as plebeian even before one hears the tone of his voice. We cannot help these things. I do not think we would help them even if we could."

VEN-
DETNA

THE beauties of nature and of humanity are so varied and profound that were it not for the inextinguishable longing after immortality which has been placed in every one of us, I think we should be perfectly satisfied with this world as it is.

Immortality

SO much of a woman's after life depends on the early training she receives. We do all we can, and yet in some cases our utmost efforts are in vain; evil creeps in, we know not how,—some unsuspected fault spoils a character that we judged to be admirable, and we are often

Early
training

VEN-
DETTA

disappointed in our most promising pupils. Alas ! there is nothing entirely without blemish in this world.



THELMA

A brief
space

IT was, for him, one of those sudden halts in life which we all experience,—an instant,—when time and the world seem to stand still, as though to permit us easy breathing ; a brief space,—in which we are allowed to stop and wonder awhile at the strange unaccountable force within us, that enables us to stand with such calm, smiling audacity, on our small pin's point of the present, between the wide dark gaps of past and future ; a small hush,—in which the gigantic engines of the universe appear to revolve no more, and the immortal Soul of man itself is subjected and overruled by supreme and eternal Thought.

The look of
a child

IT was the look of one in whose past there were no secrets—the look of a child who is satisfied with the present and takes no thought for

THELMA

the future. Few women look so after they have entered their teens. Social artifice, affectation, and the insatiate vanity that modern life encourages in the feminine nature—all these things soon do away with the pellucid clearness and steadfastness of the eye—the beautiful, true, untamed expression, which, though so rare, is, when seen, infinitely more bewitching than all the bright arrows of coquetry and sparkling invitation that flash from the glances of well-bred society dames, who have taken care to educate their eyes if not their hearts.

Romance

AS a rule, he believed more in the commonplace than in the romantic—most people do. But truth to tell, romance is far more common than the commonplace. There are few who have not, at one time or other of their lives, had some strange or tragic episode woven into the tissue of their everyday existence; and it would be difficult to find one person even among humdrum individuals, who, from birth to death, has experienced nothing out of the common.

THELMA

The bees
and their
lesson

THEY would store it up, sir ; yes, they would, even if they knew ! It is God's will that they should store it up ; it is God's will that they should show an example of unselfishness, that they should flit from flower to flower sucking therefrom the sweetness to impart unto strange palates unlike their own. It is a beautiful lesson ; it teaches us who are the ministers of the Lord to likewise suck the sweetness from the flowers of the living Gospel and impart it gladly to the unbeliever, who shall find it sweeter than the sweetest honey !

A trumpery
village

MY good fellow, don't pretend to be so deplorably ignorant ! Surely you know that a trumpery village or a twopenny town is much more choice and exclusive in its "sets" than a great city ? I wouldn't live in a small place for the world. Every inhabitant would know the cut of my clothes by heart, and the number of buttons on my waistcoat. The grocer would copy the pattern of my trousers,

—the butcher would carry a cane like mine. It would be simply insufferable.

THELMA

TIS one of the many privileges of the old, to see the world about them always young and full of children.

The old

I WILL tell you who it is that rules the people in these times,—it is the Pen—Madame la Plume! A little black, sharp, scratching devil she is,—empress of all nations! No crown but a point,—no royal robe save ink! It is certain that as long as Madame la Plume gambols freely over her realms of paper, so long must kings and autocrats shake in their shoes, and be uncertain of their thrones. Mon Dieu! if I had but the gift of writing, I would conquer the world!

Madame
la Plume

TAKING the largest goblet on the table, she filled it to the brim with wine, and touched it with her lips,—then with a smile in which a thousand radiating sunbeams seemed

An old
Norwegian
custom

THELMA

to quiver and sparkle, she lifted it towards Errington. The grace of her attitude and action wakened him out of his state of dreamy bewilderment—in his soul he devoutly blessed these ancient family customs, and arose to the occasion like a man. Clasping with a tender reverence the hands that upheld the goblet, he bent his handsome head and drank a deep draught, while his dark curls almost touched her fair ones.

The creed of
nothing

“ I ’M not afraid of death,—lots of very religious people are horribly afraid of it, though they all the time declare it’s the only path to heaven. They’re not consistent at all. You see, I believe in nothing,—I came from nothing,—I am nothing,—I shall be nothing. That being plain, I am all right.”

Güldmar laughed. “ You are an odd lad,” he said good-humouredly. “ You are in the morning of life: there are always mists in the morning as there are in the evening. In the light of your full manhood you will

see these things differently. Your creed of Nothing provides no moral law,—no hold on the conscience, no restraint on the passions,—don't you see that?"

THELMA

"**I** DON'T believe in love at first sight!"

Love at
first sight

"I do," returned Lorrimer decidedly. "Love is electricity. Two telegrams are enough to settle the business,—one from the eyes of the man, the other from those of the woman."

OLD Güldmar is an Odinite. In this blessed, enlightened nineteenth century of ours, when Christians amuse themselves by despising and condemning each other, and thus upsetting all the precepts of the Master they profess to follow, there is actually a man who sticks to the traditions of his ancestors. Odd, isn't it? In this delightful intellectual age, when more than half of us are discontented with life and yet don't want to die, there is a fine old gentleman, living beyond the Arctic Circle, who is perfectly satisfied

An Odinite

THELMA

with his existence—not only that, he thinks death the greatest glory that can befall him.

Love

A MAN, if he be strong and healthy, is always more or less ashamed when Love, with a single effort, proves him to be weaker than a blade of grass swaying in the wind. What! all his dignity, all his resolutions, all his authority, swept down by the light touch of a mere willow wand? for the very sake of his own manhood and self-respect, he cannot help but be ashamed! It is as though a little nude, laughing child mocked at a lion's strength, and made him a helpless prisoner with a fragile daisy chain. So the god Eros begins his battles, which end in perpetual victory,—first fear and shame,—then desire and passion,—then conquest and possession. And afterwards? ah! . . . afterwards the pagan deity is powerless,—a higher God, a grander force, a nobler creed, must carry Love to its supreme and best fulfilment.

HA, ha ! You call me "friend." You think that word a safeguard ! I tell you, no ! There are no friends now ; the world is a great field of battle,—each man fights the other. There is no peace,—none anywhere ! The wind fights with the forests ; you can hear them slashing and slaying all night long — when it is night — the long, long night ! The sun fights with the sky, the light with the dark, and life with death. It is all a bitter quarrel ; none are satisfied, none shall know friendship any more ; it is too late !

THELMA

Decay of
friendship

EVERYTHING in every way has been begun and completed and then forgotten over and over, in this world,—to be begun and completed and forgotten again, and so on to the end of the chapter. No one nation is better than another in this respect,—there is,—there can be, nothing new. Norway, for example, has had its day ; whether it will ever have another, I know not.

Nothing
new

"You would have been a Viking,

THELMA

Mr. Güldmar, had you lived in the old days," he said, with a smile.

A Viking

"I should indeed!" returned the old man, with an unconsciously haughty gesture of his head; "and no better fate could have befallen me! To sail the seas in hot pursuit of one's enemies or in search of further conquest,—to feel the very wind and sun beating up the blood in one's veins,—to live the life of a *man*—a true man! . . . in all the pride and worth of strength and invincible vigour!—how much better than the puling, feeble, sickly existence led by the majority of men to-day! I dwell apart from them as much as I can,—I steep my mind and body in the joys of Nature and the free fresh air,—but often I feel that the old days of the heroes must have been best,—when Gorni the Bold and the fierce Siegfried seized Paris, and stabled their horses in the chapel where Charlemagne lay buried!"

Alluding to
Shake-
speare

HE is the only glory of your country I envy! I would give anything to prove him a Norwegian.

THELMA

By Valhalla! had he but been one of the Bards of Odin, the world might have followed the grand old creed still! If anything could ever persuade me to be a Christian, it would be the fact that Shakespeare was one. If England's name is rendered imperishable, it will be through the fame of Shakespeare alone,—just as we have a kind of tenderness for degraded modern Greece, because of Homer. Ay, ay! countries and nations are worthless enough; it is only the great names of heroes that endure, to teach the lesson that is never learned sufficiently,—namely, that man, and man alone, is fitted to grasp the prize of immortality.

"**Y**OU believe in immortality?"
inquired Macfarlane seriously.

Immortality

"Believe in it? I possess it! How can it be taken from me? As well make a bird without wings, a tree without sap, an ocean without depth, as expect to find a man without an immortal soul!"

THELMA

Divine authority

"AND this Divine authority?" said Duprèz suddenly, with a delicate sarcastic smile, "how and where do you perceive it?"

"In the very Law that compels me to exist, young sir," said Güldmar,— "in the mysteries of the universe about me,—the glory of the heavens, the wonders of the sea! You have perhaps lived in cities all your life, and your mind is cramped a bit. No wonder, . . . you can hardly see the stars above the roofs of a wilderness of houses. Cities are men's work,—the gods have never had a finger in the building of them. Dwelling in them, I suppose you cannot help forgetting Divine authority altogether; but here,—here among the mountains, you would soon remember it! You should live here,—it would make a man of you!"

Grief

"WHAT is grief?"

"To love!" answered Sigurd promptly. "To see a beautiful elf with golden wings come fluttering, fluttering gently down from the sky,—you open your arms to catch her—so

. . . and just as you think you have her, she leans only a little bit on one side and falls, not into your heart—no!—into the heart of some one else! That is grief, because, when she has gone, no more elves come down from the sky—for you, at any rate,—good things may come for others,—but for you the heavens are empty!"

THELMA

WHO shall unravel the mystery of a woman's weeping? Who shall declare whether it is a pain or a relief to the overcharged heart? The dignity of a crowned queen is capable of utterly dissolving and disappearing in a shower of tears, when Love's burning finger touches the pulse, and marks its slow or rapid beatings.

A woman's weeping

" IT is what I have wondered at all my life," he said, "that skill of the brush dipped in colour. Pictures surprise me as much as poems. Ah, men are marvellous creatures, when they are once brought to understand that they are men,—not beasts! One will take a few words and harmonise them into a song or a verse that clings

Pictures

THELMA

to the world for ever; another will mix a few paints and dab a brush in them, and give you a picture that generation after generation shall flock to see. It is what is called genius,—and genius is a sort of miracle. Yet I think it is fostered by climate a good deal,—the further north, the less inspiration. Warmth, colour, and the lightness of heart that a generally bright sky brings, enlarges the brain and makes it capable of creative power."

Shake-
speare

" **H**E must have travelled," returned Güldmar positively. " No one will make me believe that the man never visited Italy. His Italian scenes prove it,—they are full of the place and the people. The whole of his works, full of such wonderful learning, and containing so many types of different nations, show,—to my mind at least,—that countries were his books of study. Why I, who am only a farmer, and proprietor of a bit of Norwegian land,—I have learned many a thing from simply taking a glance at a new shore each year. That's the way

I used to amuse myself when I was young,—now I am old, the sea tempts me less, and I am fonder of my arm-chair; yet I've seen a good deal in my time—enough to provide me with memories for my declining days. And it's a droll thing, too," he added, with a laugh, "the further south you go, the more immoral and merry are the people; the further north, the more virtuous and miserable. There's a wrong balance somewhere,—but where, 'tis not easy to find out."

THELMA

North and
South

"**A**H, bah!" he said, "what droll things remain still in the world! Yes, in spite of liberty, equality, fraternity! You do not believe in foolish legends, mademoiselle? For example, do you think you will suffer purgatory?"

"Indeed, yes!" she replied. "No one can be good enough to go straight to heaven. There must be some little stop on the way in which to be sorry for all the bad things one has done."

"'Tis the same idea as ours," said Güldmar. "We have two places of punishment in the Norse faith; one,

Purgatory

THELMA

Which is
the right
one?

Nifleheim, which is a temporary thing like the Catholic purgatory ; the other Nastrond, which is the counterpart of the Christian hell. Know you not the description of the Nifleheim in the 'Edda'?—'tis terrible enough to satisfy all tastes. 'Hela, or Death, rules over the Nine Worlds of Nifleheim. Her hall is called Grief. Famine is her table, and her only servant is Delay. Her gate is a precipice, her porch Faintness, her bed Leanness,—Cursing and Howling are her tent. Her glance is dreadful and terrifying,—and her lips are blue with the venom of Hatred.'"

"It seems to me," observed Errington, "that the Nine Worlds of Nifleheim have a resemblance to the different circles of Dante's Purgatory."

"Exactly so," said Lorrimer. "All religions seem to be more or less the same. The question I can never settle is, which is the right one ?"

Possibilities

PHILIP and Thelma,—man and woman in the full flush of youth, health, beauty, and happiness,—had just entered their Paradise,—their fairy-

garden,—and every little flower and leaf on the way had special, sweet interest for them. Love's indefinable glories,—Love's proud possibilities,—Love's long ecstacies,—these, like so many spirit-figures, seemed to smile and beckon them on, on, on, through golden seas of sunlight,—through flower-filled fields of drowsy entrance-ment,—through winding ways of rose-strewn and lily-scented leafage,—on, on, with eyes and hearts absorbed in one another,—unseeing any end to the dreamlike wonders that, like some heavenly picture-scroll, unrolled slowly and radiantly before them.

Life was worth living, worth cherishing, worth ennobling. The reason of all things seemed clear to him. Love, and Love only, supported, controlled, and grandly completed the universe! He accepted this answer to all perplexities,—his heart expanded with a sense of large content—his soul was satisfied.

“PERHAPS there will be some people wicked enough to hate her ladyship, Morris?” “I shouldn't

THELMA

Love and
life

Hate

THELMA

wonder," said Morris philosophically. "I shouldn't wonder at all! There's a deal of hate about one way or another—and if a lady is as beautiful as an angel, and cuts out everybody wherever she goes, why, you can't expect the other ladies to be very fond of her. 'Tisn't in human nature—at least, not in feminine human nature. Men don't care much about their looks one way or the other, unless they're young chaps—then one has a little patience with them, and they come all right."

An
aristocratic
"crush"

WHOMO can adequately describe the thrilling excitement attending an aristocratic "crush"—an extensive, sweeping-off-of-old-scores "at home," that scene of bewildering confusion which might be appropriately set forth to the minds of the vulgar in the once-popular ditty, "Such a getting-upstairs I never did see!" Who can paint in sufficiently brilliant colours the mere outside of a house thus distinguished by this strange festivity, in which there is no actual pleasure,—this crowding of carriages—this shouting of small

boys and policemen?—who can, in words, delineate the various phases of lofty indignation and offence on the countenances of pompous coachmen, forced into contention with vulgar but good-natured “cabbys” for right of way? . . . who can sufficiently set forth the splendours of a striped awning avenue, lined on both sides with a collection of tropical verdure, hired for the occasion at so much per dozen pots, and illuminated with Chinese lanterns!

Yes—a great many people endure sharp twinges of discontent at the sight of Awning Avenue,—people who can't afford to give parties, and who wish they could,—pretty, sweet girls who never go to a dance in their lives, and long with all their innocent hearts for a glimpse,—just one glimpse!—of what seems to them inexhaustible, fairy-like delight,—lonely folks, who imagine in their simplicity that all who are privileged to pass between the lines of hired tropical foliage aforementioned must perchance be the best and most united of friends—hungry men and women who picture, with

THELMA

Awning Avenue

THELMA

watering mouths, the supper-table that lies beyond the awning, laden with good things, of the very names of which they are hopelessly ignorant,—while now and then a stern, dark-browed Thinker or two may stalk by and metaphorically shake his fist at all the waste, extravagance, useless luxury, humbug, and hypocrisy, Awning Avenue usually symbolises.

Modern society

MODERN society contains within itself the seed of its own destruction,—the most utter Nihilist that ever swore deadly oath need but contain his soul in patience, and allow the seed to ripen. For God's justice is as a circle that slowly surrounds an evil and as slowly closes on it with crushing and resistless force,—and feverish, fretting humanity, however nobly inspired, can do nothing either to hasten or retard the round, perfect, absolute, and Divine Law. So let the babes of the world play on, and let us not frighten them with stories of earthquakes,—they are miserable enough as it is, believe it!—their toys are so brittle, and snap in their feeble hands

THELMA

so easily, that one is inclined to pity them! And Awning Avenue, with its borrowed verdure and artificial light, is frequently erected for the use of some of the most wretched among the children of the earth,—children who have trifled with and lost everything,—love, honour, hope, and faith, and who are travelling rapidly to the grave with no consolation save a few handfuls of base coins, which they must, perforce, leave behind them at the last.

YOU see, we novelists have an unfortunate trick of looking at the worst or most ludicrous side of everything—we can't help it! So many apparently lofty and pathetic tragedies turn out, on close examination, to be the meanest and most miserable of farces,—it's no good making them out to be grand Greek poems when they are only base doggerel rhymes. Besides, it's the fashion nowadays to be *chiffonniers* in literature—to pick up the rags of life and sort them in all their uncomeliness before the morbid eyes of the public.

Novelists

THELMA

What's the use of spending thought and care on the manufacture of a jewelled diadem and offering it to the people on a velvet cushion, when they prefer an *olla-podrida* of cast-off clothing, dried bones, and candle-ends? In brief, what would it avail to write as grandly as Shakespeare or Scott, when society clamours for Zola and others of his school?

"Joyous
Fraternity"

SHE had once imagined that all the men and women of culture who followed the higher professions must perforce be a sort of "Joyous Fraternity" superior to other mortals not so gifted,—and, under this erroneous impression, she was at first eager to know some of the so-called "great" people who had distinguished themselves in literature or the fine arts. She had fancied that they must of necessity be all refined, sympathetic, large-hearted, and noble-minded—alas! how grievously was she disappointed! She found, to her sorrow, that the tree of modern Art bore but few wholesome roses and many cankered buds—that the "Joyous

Fraternity" were not joyous at all—but on the contrary, inclined to dyspepsia and discontent. She found that even poets, whom she had fondly deemed were the angel-guides among the children of this earth,—were most of them painfully conceited, selfish in aim and limited in thought,—moreover, that they were often so empty of all true inspiration, that they were actually able to hate and envy one another with a sort of womanish spite and temper,—that novelists, professing to be in sympathy with the heart of humanity, were no sooner brought into contact one with another, than they plainly showed by look, voice, and manner, the contempt they entertained for each other's work,—that men of science were never so happy as when trying to upset each other's theories;—that men of religious combativeness were always on the alert to destroy each other's creeds,—and that, in short, there was a very general tendency to mean jealousies, miserable heart-burnings, and utter weariness all round.

THELMA

The so-called
"great"

THELMA

Our
servantsA pinch of
snuff

TALK of private detectives and secret service! Do private detectives ever discover so much as the servants of a man's own household? —servants who are aware of the smallest trifles,—who know the name and position of every visitor that comes and goes,—who easily learn to recognise the hand-writing on every letter that arrives—who laugh and talk in their kitchens over things that their credulous masters and mistresses imagine are unknown to all the world save themselves,—who will judge the morals of a Duke, and tear the reputation of a Duchess to shreds, for the least, the most trifling error of conduct! If you can stand well with your servants, you can stand well with the whole world—if not—carry yourself as haughtily as you may—your pride will not last long, depend upon it!

CULTIVATE the humour of a Socrates, and reduce everything by means of close argument to its smallest standpoint, and the world, life, and time are no more than a pinch

of snuff for some great Titanic god to please his giant nose withal !

THELMA

“ONLY a misunderstanding. . . .”
Only a misunderstanding!
How many there are who can trace back broken friendships and severed loves to that one thing—“only a misunderstanding!” The tenderest relations are often the most delicate and subtle, and “trifles light as air” may scatter and utterly destroy the sensitive gossamer threads extending between one heart and another, as easily as a child’s passing foot destroys the spider’s web woven on the dewy grass in the early mornings of spring.

A misunderstanding

OUR nearest and dearest are often those who are most in the dark respecting our private and personal sufferings,—we do not wish to trouble them,—and they prefer to think that everything is right with us, even though the rest of the world can plainly perceive that everything is wrong. To the last moment they will refuse to see death in our faces, though the veriest stranger, meeting us casu-

Our nearest and dearest

THELMA

ally, clearly beholds the shadow of the dark Angel's hand.

Summer in
England

SUMMER in Shakespeare Land ! Summer in the heart of England —summer in wooded Warwickshire,—a summer, brilliant, warm, radiant with flowers, melodious with the songs of the heaven—aspiring larks, and the sweet, low trill of the forest-hidden nightingales. Wonderful and divine it is to hear the wild chorus of nightingales that sing beside Como in the hot languorous nights of an Italian July—wonderful to hear them maddening themselves with love and music, and almost splitting their slender throats with the bursting bubble of burning song,—to hear them warbling less passionately but more plaintively, beneath the drooping leafage of those grand old trees, some of which may have stretched their branches in shadowy benediction over the sacred head of the grandest poet in the world.

Crying

IT is foolish to cry even when the heart aches. I have found that,—no one in the world ever pities you !

But perhaps you do not know the world,—ah! it is very hard and cold; all the people hide their feelings, and pretend to be what they are not.

THELMA

God

“I DON’T know what you mean by a heathen,” replied Britta almost gaily. “But I can’t believe that God, who is so good, is going to everlasting burn anybody. He couldn’t, you know! It would hurt Him so much to see poor creatures writhing about in flames for ever—we would not be able to bear it, and I’m quite sure it would make Him miserable even in heaven. Because He is all Love—He says so—He couldn’t be cruel!”

Love

IS Love alone worth living for—worth dying for? Is it the only satisfying good we can grasp at among the shifting shadows of our brief existence? In its various phases and different workings, is it, after all, the brightest radiance known in the struggling darkness of our lives?

“Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime—
Love, that is blood within the veins of time.”

WORM-WOOD

Sleep

“Mad”

SILENCE,—silence! It is the hour of the deepest hush of night; the invisible, intangible clouds of sleep brood over the brilliant city. Sleep! What is it? Forgetfulness? A sweet unconsciousness of dreamless rest? Aye! it must be so, if I remember rightly; but I cannot be quite sure, for it seems a century since I slept well. But what of that? Does any one sleep well nowadays, save children and hard-worked diggers of the soil? We who think—oh, the entanglements and perplexities of this perpetual Thought!—we have no space or time wherein to slumber; between the small hours of midnight and morning we rest on our pillows for mere form's sake, and doze and dream,—but we do not sleep.

WHO is mad, and who is sane? It is not easy to decide. The world has various ways of defining insanity in different individuals. The genius who has grand ideas and imagines he can carry them out, is “mad”; the priest who, like Saint Damien,

sacrifices himself for others, is "mad"; the hero who, like the English Gordon, perishes at his post instead of running away to save his own skin, is "mad"; and only the comfortable tradesman, or financier who amasses millions by systematically cheating his fellows, is "sane."

Live everybody, and everything that can live without a conscience, for conscience is at a discount in this age, and honesty cannot keep pace with our modern progress! The times are as we make them; and we have made ours those of realism; the old idyllic days of faith and sentiment are past.

THOSE cold and quiet stars! What innumerable multitudes of them there are! Why were they created? Through countless centuries bewildered mankind has gazed at them and asked the same question,—a question never to be answered,—a problem never to be solved. The mind soon grows fatigued with pondering. It is better not to think.

WORM-WOOD

Stars

WORM-WOOD

Modern needs

WELL, we live in a great and wonderful era, and we have great and wonderful needs—needs which must be supplied! One of our chief requirements is that we should know everything—even things that used for honour and decency's sake to be concealed. Wise and pure and beautiful things we have had enough of. They belong to the old classic days of Greece and Rome, the ages of idyll and allegory; and we find them on the whole rather *ennuyant*. We have developed different tastes. We want the ugly truths of life, not the pretty fables. We like ugly truths. We find them piquant and palatable, like the hot sauce poured on fish to give it a flavour. For example, the story of “Paul et Virginie” is very charming, but also very tame and foolish. It suited the literary spirit of the time in which it was written; but to us in the present day there is something far more *entrainant* in a novel which faithfully describes the love-making of Jeanne the washer-woman with Jacques the rag-picker. We prefer their coarse amours to Virginie's

tearful sentiment—*autres temps, autres mœurs.*

WORM-WOOD

I MIGHT have been rich, I might have been respectable, I might even have been famous—imagine it! for I know I once had a few glimmerings of the swift lightning called genius in me, and that my thoughts were not precisely like those of every-day men and women. But chance was against me, chance or fate; both terms are synonymous. Let none talk to me of opposing one's self to fate; that is simply impossible. Fight as we may, we cannot alter an evil destiny, or reverse a lucky one. Resist temptation! cry the preachers. Very good! but suppose you cannot resist?

Destiny

MORALITY has always seemed to me such an ambiguous term! I asked my father to define it once, and he answered me thus—“Morality is a full and sensible recognition of the responsibilities of one's being, and a steadfast obedience to the laws of God and one's country.”

Morality

WORM-WOOD

Exactly! but how does this definition work, when by the merest chance you discover that you have no actual responsibilities, and that it does not matter in the least what becomes of you? Again, that the laws of God and country are drawn up, after much violent dispute and petty wrangling, by a few human individuals nearly, if not quite, as capricious and unreasonable as yourself? What of morality, then? Does it not resolve itself into a myth, like the Creed the churches live by?

A truce, I say, to such fair-seeming hypocritical shows of good, in a world which is evil to its very core! Let us know ourselves truly for what we are; let us not deceive our minds with phantasms of what we cannot be.

Might-Have-Been

NO wise man stops to consider his by-gone possibilities. The land of Might-Have-Been is, after all, nothing but a blurred prospect; a sort of dim and distant landscape, where the dull clouds rain perpetual tears!

WORM-WOOD

OF course the beginning of my history is—love. It is the beginning of every man and every woman's history, if they are only frank enough to admit it. Before that period, life is a mere series of smooth and small events, monotonously agreeable or disagreeable, according to our surroundings, a time in which we learn a few useful things and a great many useless ones, and are for the most part in a half-awakened, pleasing state of uncertainty and wonder about the world in general. Love lights upon us suddenly like a flame, and lo! we are transformed; we are for the first time alive, and conscious of our beating pulses, our warm and hurrying blood; we feel; we know; we gain a wisdom wider and sweeter than any to be found in books, and we climb step by step up the height of ecstasy, till we stand in so lofty an altitude that we seem to ourselves to dominate both earth and heaven! It is only a fool's paradise we stumble into, after all; but, then, everything is more or less foolish in this world; if we wish to avoid folly, we must seek a different planet.

Love transforms

WORM-WOOD

A rough truth

Special intercession

Men never fall in love at first with a woman's mind; only with her body. They may learn to admire the mind afterwards if it prove worth admiration, but it is always a secondary thing. This may be called a rough truth, but it is true for all that. Who marries a woman of intellect by choice? No one, and if some unhappy man does it by accident, he generally regrets it. A stupid beauty is the most comfortable sort of housekeeper going, believe me; she will be strict with the children, scold the servants, and make herself look as ornamental as she can, till age and fat render ornament superfluous.

"It is very touching and very beautiful," he said, "that quaint faith of the lower classes concerning special intercession. I have never been able to see anything ridiculous in the superstition which is born of ignorance:—as well blame an innocent child for believing in the pretty fancies taken from fairy-tales, as scoff at the poor peasant for trusting that one or other of the saints will have a special

care of his vineyard or field of corn. I love the ignorant!—they are our flock, our ‘little ones,’ whom we are to guide and instruct.”

WORM-WOOD

IT takes a long while to ripen a man’s sense of right and honour into a fixed guiding-rule for life. Those who are republicans in the flush of their impetuous youth may be Royalists or Imperialists when they arrive at mature manhood; those who are atheists when they first commence their career, may become devout servants of Heaven before they have reached the middle of their course. Patience for all and prejudice for none! otherwise we, as followers of Christ, lay ourselves open to just blame.

Patience

ONE should always prove the truth of things before believing in an ill report. Virtue is so very easily calumniated!

Scandal

RELIGION is poetry—poetry is religion. The worship of beauty is as holy a service as the worship of the beauty-creating Divinity. There

Religion

WORM-WOOD

is a great deal of harm done to the Church by bigotry—the priesthood are too fond of sackcloth and ashes, penitence and prayer. They should look out upon the mirror of the world, and see life reflected there in all its varying dark and brilliant colours; then, raising their thoughts to Heaven, they should appeal for grace to understand these wonders, and explain them to the less enlightened multitude. The duty of a priest is, to my thinking, to preach of happiness and hope, not sorrow and death.

Women

WOMEN are strange folk! Some are cruel, some frivolous, some faithless; but I believe they are nearly all alike in their immense, their boundless capacity for loving. Find me a woman who has never loved anything or anybody, and you will have found the one, the only marvel of the centuries!

Remem-brance

REMEMBRANCE is very bitter, and very useless as well; to play out one's part bravely in the world, I have said one should have no

conscience; but it is far more necessary to have no memory! Are there any poor souls wearing on forlornly towards the grave, and monotonously performing the daily routine of life without either heart or zest in living? Let such look back to the time when the world first opened out before their inexperienced gaze like a brilliant arena of fair fortune, wherein they fancied they might win the chiefest prize, and then they will understand the meaning of spiritual torture! Then will the mind be stretched on a wrenching rack of thought!—then will the futile tears fill the tired eyes; then will the passionate craving for death become more and more clamorous—death, and utter, blessed forgetfulness! Ah! if one could only be sure that we do forget when we die!—but that is just what I, for one, cannot count upon. The uncertainty fills me with horror! I dare not allow myself to dwell upon the idea that perhaps I may sink drowningly from the dull shores of life into a tideless ocean of eternal remembrance!

Shall we
forget?

WORM-WOOD

First im-
pressions

Solitude

THOUGH first impressions are sometimes erroneous, I believe there is a balance in favour of their correctness. If a singular antipathy seizes you for a particular person at first sight, no matter how foolish it may seem, you may be almost sure that there is something in your two natures that is destined to remain in constant opposition. You may conquer it for a time; it may even change, as it did in my case, to profound affection; but, sooner or later, it will spring up again with tenfold strength and deadliness; the reason of your first aversion will be made painfully manifest, and the end of it all will be doubly bitter because of the love that for a brief while sweetened it.

ONLY the straight-minded and pure of heart are fit for solitude,—there being no solitude anywhere! No solitude!—for every inch of space is occupied by some eyed germ of life,—and none can tell how, or by whom our most secret deeds are watched and chronicled! To be alone, simply means to be confronted

with God's invisible, silent cloud of witnesses.

WORM-WOOD

REALLY I do believe there are strange influences in the air sometimes; like seeds of plants blown by the wind to places where they may best take root and fructify; so the unseen yet living organic infusions of hatred—or love,—joy or sorrow, may be, for all we know, broadcast in the seemingly clear ether, ready to sink sooner or later into the human hearts prepared to receive and germinate them. It is a wonderful Universe! and wonderful things come of it!

Strange influences

A SPOKEN lie is bad enough,— but a wilfully acted lie is worse! And yet, alas!—what a false world we live in!—how full of the most gracefully performed lying! The pity of it is that when truth is spoken, no one can be got to believe it.

A lie

THERE are some griefs that can follow and persecute to the very death even Crœsus among his bags of bullion. I begin to think poverty is

Poverty

WORM-WOOD

Poverty

one of the least of human misfortunes. It is a sort of thing you so soon get accustomed to ! It sits upon one easily, like an old coat ! You cease to desire a dinner if you never have it!—it is quite extraordinary how the appetite suits itself to circumstances, and puts up with a cigar at twenty centimes instead of a *filet* for one franc!—the *filet* is actually not missed ! And what a number of remarkable cases we have had shown to us lately in the field of science, of men existing for a long period of time, without any nourishment save water ! I have been deeply interested in that subject,—I believe in the system thoroughly,—I have tried it (for my own amusement of course!). Yes—I have tried it for several days together ! I find it answers very well!—it is apt to make one feel quite light upon one's feet,—almost aerial in fact, and ready to fly, as if one were disembodied!—most curious and charming !

P HYSICAL perfection generally enchains us far more than mental,—as the tiger paces round his mate,

WORM-WOOD

The
physical
attraction

attracted by her sinuous form, her velvety skin and fiery eyes, so we court and ogle the woman whose body seems to us the fairest,—so women, in their turn, cast amorous eyes at him whose strength seems the best comparison to their weakness. Of course there are exceptions to the rule,—but so rarely do they occur, that they are chronicled among the world's "romances" not realities. And we want realities nowadays, do we not? —no foolish glozing over of true and ugly facts? Well!—one very true and very ugly fact is paramount in human history; namely, that this merely physical attraction between man and woman is of the briefest continuance, and nearly always turns to absolute loathing! We are punished when we admire one another's perishable beauty to the exclusion of all mental or intelligent considerations,—punished in a thousand frightful ways,—ways which have truly a savour of Hell! It is, perhaps, unjust that the punishment should fall so heavily,—but fall it does, without question.

WORM-WOOD

Society

WELL, why does not every sinner make a clean breast of his secret evil thoughts and misdeeds, and, blazoning them to the world, abide calmly by the result? It would be noble,—it would be stern-principled,—but afterwards? When we had all frankly admitted ourselves to be more or less liars and knaves not worth a handshake or a thank-you, what then? Nothing but this,—society would be at an end, and we might as well pull down our cities and return in howling nudity to the forest of primeval barbarism.

J'ai faim

J'ai faim! All is said! It is the universal cry of existence—hunger! And the remarkable part of the whole affair is, that the complaint is incessant; even Monsieur Gros-Jean, conscious of the well-rounded paunch he has acquired through over-feeding, has never had enough, and at morning, noon, and evening, propounds the hunger problem afresh, and curses his chef for not providing more novelties in the cuisine. Humanity is never satisfied,—it ransacks earth, air, ocean,

WORM-WOOD

—it gathers together gold, jewels, palaces, ships, wine—and woman,—and then, when all is gotten that can be gained out of the labouring universe, it turns its savage face towards Heaven and apostrophises Deity with a defiance. “This world is not enough for my needs!” it cries. “I will put Orion in my pocket and wear the Pleiades in my button-hole!—I will have Eternity for my heritage and Thyself for my comrade! *J'ai faim!*”

MAN was born a savage, and he is still happiest in a state of savagery. He has been civilised over and over again, believe me, through innumerable cycles of time,—but the savage cannot be gotten out of him, and if allowed to do so, he returns to his pristine condition of lawless liberty with the most astonishing ease! Civilised, we are shackled and bound in a thousand ways when we wish to give rein to our natural impulses; we should be much more contented in our original state of brutishness and nudity. And contentment is what we want,—and

A savage

WORM-WOOD

what in our present modes of constrained culture we never get.

We call it
Life

THE vital principle,—the strange ethereal essence that colours the blood, strings the nerves, lights the eyes, and works the brain,—we call it Life,—but it is something more than life—it is Spirit.

Paris

PARIS is described as a brilliant centre of civilisation, but it is the civilisation of the organ-grinder's monkey, who is trained to wear coat and hat, do a few agile tricks, grab at money, crack nuts, and fastidiously examine the insect parasites of his own skin. It is not a shade near the civilisation of old Rome or Athens, nor does it even distinctly resemble that of Nineveh or Babylon. In those age-buried cities—if we may credit historical records—men believed in the dignity of manhood, and did their best to still further enoble it; but we in our day are so thoroughly alive to our own ridiculousness generally, that we spare neither time nor trouble in impressing ourselves with the fact.

TO be nobler than common is a sufficient reason for contempt and misprisal by the vulgar majority,—and never yet was there a grand spirit shut in human form, whether Socrates or Christ, that has not been laid on the rack of torture and wrenched piecemeal by the red-hot flaying-irons of public spite, derision, or neglect.

WORM-WOOD

To be nobler

A BRAVE, sweet, pure-minded woman is the most terrific reproach that exists on earth to the evil-doer and wicked man. It is as though the deaf blind God suddenly made Himself manifest,—as though He not only heard and saw, but with His voice thundered loud accusation ! Many of us,—I speak of men,—cling to bad women, and give them our ungrudging admiration—and why ? Because they help us to be vile !—because they laugh at our vices and foster them,—and we love them for that ! But good women ! —I tell you that such are often left loveless and alone, because they will not degrade themselves to our brute-level. We want toys, not angels !—puppets, not queens ! But all the same, when

Good women

WORM-WOOD

the angel or the queen passes us by with the serene scorn of our base passions written in her clear calm eyes, we shrink and are ashamed,—aye! if only for a moment's space!

Common-place days

WE are supposed to be living in very common-place days,—though truly this is one of the greatest errors the modern wise-acres ever indulged in. Never was there a period in which there was so much fatal complexity of thought and discussion; never was there a time in which men and women were so prone to analyse themselves and the world they inhabit with more pitiless precision and fastidious doubt and argument; and this tendency creates such strange new desires, such subtle comparisons, such marvellous accuracy of perception, such discontent, such keen yet careless valuation of life at its best, that more romances and tragedies are enacted now than Sophocles ever dreamed of.



WORLDS unexplored, universes unguessed, mysteries unfathomed! all vague and vast and inexplicable, yet surely full of promise. There must be Something—something behind the veil, when spirits are stripped of mortality and front each other unafraid! There must be Love—there should be Peace! God! in Thy unknown deeps of Life, let me lose myself and find—Thee!

THE
SILENCE
OF THE
MAHA-
RAJAH

Something

ANY man who has won for himself the treasure of a good woman's entire love, should do his level best to make himself as worthy of it as he can.

THREE
WISE
MEN OF
GOTHAM

THE next morning I heard that the child was dead. She had died in the night, and with her last fluttering breath she had tried to sing her little fairy song. And so the human "Zéphyr" had floated away

MADEM-
OISELLE
ZÉPHYR

MADEM-
OISELLE
ZÉPHYR

from the stage of this life, where
fairyland is only the dream of poets,
to the unknown country—to the

“Island valley of Avilion,
Where never wind blows loudly.”

“Zéphyr”

Thinking of her as I write, I almost
fancy I see a delicate sprite on rain-
bow pinions flitting past me; I almost
hear the sweet child-voice rendered
powerful and pure by the breath of
immortality, singing softly—

“Follow me soon
Back to my palace behind the moon,
Where I reign for ever and ever!”

And who shall assert that she does
not reign in some distant glorified
region—the little queen of a chosen
court of child-angels for whom this
present world was too hard and
sorrowful?

ANGEL'S
WICKED-
NESS
from
'CAMEOS'

“PLEASE, sir, I want to leave the
class, sir!”

“You want to leave the class,
Johnnie Coleman!” echoed the clergy-
man. “What for?”

"Please, sir, 'cos Angel's gone, sir!" and Johnnie stumped his way to the front and showed himself—a small, bright, elfish-looking boy of about twelve. "Yer see, sir, I can't anyways promise not to speak to Angel, sir; she's my gal!" A gurgling laugh of evident delight rippled along the class at Johnnie's bold avowal, but a stern look from Mr. Snawley rapidly checked this ebullition of feeling.

"Your gal!" And the clergyman repeated the words in a tone of shocked offence. "John Coleman, you surprise me!"

John Coleman, ragged, blue-eyed and dirty, seemed to care but little as to whether he surprised the Reverend Josiah or not, for he resumed the thread of his shameless argument with the most unblushing audacity.

"Iss, sir. She's my gal, an' I'm her bloke. Lor' bless yer, sir! we've bin so fur years an' years—ivver since we wos babbies, sir. Yer see, sir, 'twouldn't do fur me to go agin Angel now—'twouldn't be gentleman-like, sir!"

ANGEL'S
WICKED-
NESS
from
'CAMEOS'

"My gal"

ANGEL'S
WICKED-
NESS
from
'CAMEOS.'

A true
knight

Evidently John Coleman knew his code of chivalry by heart, though he was only a costermonger's apprentice, and was not to be moved by fear from any of the rules thereof, for, gathering courage instead of alarm from the amazed and utter speechlessness of wrath with which Mr. Snawley regarded him, he proceeded to defend the cause of his absent ladye-love after the fashion of all true knights worthy of their name.

"I spec's Angel's hungry, sir. That's wot riles her wrong-like. Don't yer know, sir, what it is to 'ave a gnawin' in yer inside, sir? Oh, it's orful bad, sir! really 'tis, sir—makes yer 'ate everybody wot's got their stummicks full. An' when Angel gets a bit 'ere an' there, she gives it all to 'er father, sir, an' niver a mossul for 'erself; an' now 'e's a going to 'is long 'ome, so they sez, an' it's 'ard on Angel anyways, an'——"

"That will do!" burst out Mr. Snawley loudly, and suddenly interrupting the flow of Master Johnnie's eloquence, and glaring at him in majestic disdain: "You can go!"

"Iss, sir. Thank-ye, sir. Much obleeged, sir." And, with many a shuffle and grin, Johnnie departed cheerfully, apparently quite unconscious of having committed any breach of good manners in the open declaration of his sentiments towards his "gal" and entirely unaware of the fact that, apart from the disgust his "vulgarity" had excited in the refined mind of the Reverend Josiah, he had actually caused the pale suggestion of a blush to appear on the yellow maiden cheek of Miss Powser! Immoral John Coleman! It is to be feared he was totally "unregenerate"—for once out of the schoolroom he never gave it or his pious teachers another thought, but, whooping and whistling carelessly, started off at a run, intending to join Angel and comfort her as best he might, for her private and personal griefs as well as for her expulsion from the Bible-class.

ANGEL'S
WICKED-
NESS
from
'CAMEOS'



TINY
TRAMPS
from
'CAMEOS.'

The idea of
childhood

THE idea of childhood is generally associated in our minds with mirth, grace, and beauty. The fair-haired, blue-eyed treasures of proud and tender mothers; the plump, rosy little ones whose fresh young hearts know no sorrow save the sometimes ungratified longing for a new toy or new game—these are the fairy blossoms of our lives, for whom childhood really exists, and for whose dear sakes we think no sacrifice too great, no pain too wearisome, no work too heavy, so long as we can keep them in health, strength, and happiness, and ward off from their lives every shadow of suffering. And as we caress our own dimpled darlings, and listen to their merry prattling voices and their delightful laughter, we find it difficult to realise that there are other children in the world, born of the same great Mother Nature, who live on without even knowing that they are children, and who have "begun life" in the bitterest manner at a time when they can scarcely toddle; children to whom toys are inexplicable mysteries, and for whom the bright

regions of fairy-land have never been unclosed.

These poor little waifs and strays, no matter how young they are in years, are old—one might almost say they were born old—they are familiar with the dark and crooked paths of life, and the broad, shining, golden road of love, duty, wisdom, and peace has never been pointed out to their straying little feet. Homes for destitute children may and do exist, refuges and charities of all kinds are open to those who seek them; and yet, in spite of all that is done, or is doing, poor child-wanderers walk the earth, and meet us in streets and country roads, clothed in rags, their pinched faces begrimed with dirt and tears, and their tiny voices attuned to the beggar's whine, while too often, alas! their young hearts are already withered by the corroding influences of deceit and cunning.

TINY
TRAMPS
from
'CAMEOS'

Born old



SORROWS
OF
SATAN

Honest
beasts

“AN exception? I?”—and he laughed bitterly. “Yes, you are right; I am an exception among men perhaps,—but I am one with the beasts in honesty! The lion does not assume the manners of the dove,—he loudly announces his own ferocity. The very cobra, stealthy though its movements be, evinces its meaning by a warning hiss or rattle. The hungry wolf’s bay is heard far down the wind, intimidating the hurrying traveller among the wastes of snow. But man gives no clue to his intent—more malignant than the lion, more treacherous than the snake, more greedy than the wolf, he takes his fellow-man’s hand in pretended friendship, and an hour later defames his character behind his back,—with a smiling face he hides a false and selfish heart—flinging his pigmy mockery at the riddle of the Universe, he stands gibing at God, feebly a-straddle on his own earth-grave—Heavens!” —here he stopped short with a passionate gesture—“What should the Eternities do with such a thankless, blind worm as he!”

THOU knowest the trick of lining thy pouch with gold ! 'Twould be but a fool's error to wag thy tongue against this alien whom thou shelterest while thou dost charge him double fees for food and lodgment ! Go to ! Thou canst not judge of him fairly,—good ready money doth quickly purchase good opinion !

BARAB-BAS

Ready
money

TO slay the innocent hath ever been man's delight. Doth he not trap the singing-birds, and draw his knife across the throat of the fawn ? Doth he not tear up the life of a blameless tree, and choke the breath of flowers in the grasp of his hand ? What would'st thou, thou meditative, black-browed son of Judea ? Physically or morally, the innocent are always slain in this world. No one believes in a pure body—still less do they believe in a pure soul. Pure soul and pure body are there in yonder thorn-crowned Monarch of many lands.

Man's
delight

BARAB-
BASCowards
and men

KNOWEST thou not that cowards and men are one and the same thing, most excellent Barabbas? Didst ever philosophise? If not, why didst thou read Greek and Roman scrolls, and puzzle thy brain with the subtle wisdom of Egypt? No man was ever persistently heroic, in small matters as well as great,—and famous deeds are ever done on impulse. Study thyself,—note thine own height and breadth,—thou hast so much bone and muscle and sinew,—'tis a goodly frame, well knit together, and to all intents and purposes thou art Man. Nevertheless a glance from a woman's eyes, a smile on a woman's mouth, a word of persuasion or suggestion from a woman's tongue, can make thee steal and commit murder. Wherefore thou, Man, art also Coward. Too proud to rob, too merciful to slay,—this would be courage, and more than is in man. For men are pygmies,—they scuttle away in droves before a storm or the tremor of an earthquake—they are afraid for their lives. And what are their lives? The lives of motes in a sunbeam,—of gnats in a mist of

BARAB-BAS

miasma,—nothing more. And they will never be anything more, till they learn how to make them valuable. And that lesson will never be mastered save by the few!

Time

THERE is time to eat, time to steal, time to lie, time to murder, time to become a degradation to the very name of Man;—but there is no time to pause and consider that after all our petty labours and selfish ambitions, this star on which we live belongs, not to us, but to God, and that if He but willed it so, it could be blotted out of space in a second and never be missed, save perhaps for the one singular distinction that the Divine Christ dwelling upon it from birth to death, has made it sacred.

A noble madman

“TO this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth! Every one that is of the Truth knoweth My voice.” While He thus spoke, Pilate gazed upon

BARAB-BAS

Pilate

Him in solemn astonishment. Here was no traitor or criminal, but simply one of the world's noblest madmen ! More convincing than all the other accusations brought against Him by priests and people was His own unqualified admission of folly. For who-soever sought to "bear witness unto the Truth" in a world kept up by lies, could not be otherwise than mad ! Had it not always been thus ? and would it not be always thus ? Had not the Athenian Socrates met his death nearly five hundred years agone for merely uttering the Truth ? Pilate, more instructed than the majority in Greek and Roman philosophy, knew that no fault was so reprehensible in all classes of society as simple plain-speaking ; it was almost safer to murder a man than tell the truth of him ! Thus thinking he gave a hopeless gesture of final abandonment to destiny ; and with an ironical bitterness he was scarcely conscious of, uttered the never-to-be-forgotten, never-to-be-answered query, "What is Truth ?"

COMPASSION and interest for birds and animals and creeping things of the wood and field often distinguish the otherwise selfish and cold-hearted ; and many a man has been known to love a dog when in human relationships he would willingly slander his friends or slay his brother.

BARAB.
BASLove for
animals

O H, the horrible, horrible burden of recognised sin!—the dragging leaden weight that ties the immortal spirit down to grossness and materialism, when it would fain wing its way to the highest attainment !—the crushing consciousness of being driven back into darkness out of light supernal ! of being thrust away, as it were, with loathing, out of the sight and knowledge of the Divine !

Sin

“WHAT is past is past,”—he said gravely—“Thou canst never undo, Peter, what thou hast done,—and this falsehood of thine must needs be chronicled for all time as a token to prove a truth,—the

A truth

BARAB-BAS

awful truth that often by one act, one word, man makes his destiny."

Woman-hood

HE who curses woman or despises her, must henceforth be himself despisëd and accursëd. For now by woman's purity is the whole world redeemed,—by woman's tenderness and patience the cords of everlasting love are tied between this earth and highest heaven! Truly the language of symbols is hid from thee, if thou canst curse woman, remembering that of woman thy Master was born into the world ! Were there a million treacherous women meriting thy curse, it matters little,—for from henceforward Womanhood is rendered sacred in the sight of the Eternal, through Her whom now we call the Mother of the "Nazarene"!

History

THOU sayest well, Petrus;— 'twere hard that Judas should be evermore accursed and thou adjudged a true apostle ! Yet such things happen—for the world loves contrarys and falsifications of history,

BARAB-BAS

—and while perchance it takes a month to spread a lie, it takes a hundred centuries to prove a truth !

“**A**LL men know what it is ;” replied Barabbas drearily—“A choking of the breath,—a blindness of the eyes,—darkness, silence, and an end !”

“Nay, not an end, but a beginning !” said Melchior, rising and confronting him, his eyes flashing with enthusiasm—“That choking of the breath,—that blindness of the eyes—these are the throes of birth, not death ! Even as the new-born child struggles for air, and cannot too suddenly endure the full unshaded light of day,—so does the new-born soul that struggles forth from out its fleshly womb, fight gaspingly for strength to take its first deep breathings-in of living glory ! A darkness and a silence, sayest thou ? Not so !—a radiance and a music !—a wondrous clamour of the angels’ voices ringing out melodies aloft like harps in tune ! And of the spirit lately parted from the earth, they ask—‘What bringest thou ? What message dost thou bear ? Hast thou

Death

BARAB-BAS

made the sad world happier, wiser, fairer ?' And over all, the deathless Voice of Marvel thunders : ' Soul of a man ! What hast thou done ?' And that great question must be met and answered,—and no Lie will serve!"

Mysteries

IF thou dost wait till thou canst "comprehend" the mysteries of the Divine Will, thou wilt need to grope through æons upon æons of eternal wonder, living a thinking life through all, and even then not reach the inner secret. Comprehendest thou how the light finds its sure way to the dry seed in the depths of earth and causes it to fructify?—or how, imprisoning itself within drops of water and grains of dust, it doth change these things of ordinary matter into diamonds which queens covet? Thou art not able to "comprehend" these simplest facts of simple nature,—and nature being but the outward reflex of God's thought, how should'st thou understand the workings of His interior Spirit which is Himself in all? Whether He create a world, or

breathe the living Essence of His own Divinity into aerial atoms to be absorbed in flesh and blood, and born as Man of virginal Woman, He hath the power supreme to do such things, if such be His great pleasure. Talkest thou of miracles?—thou art thyself a miracle,—thou livest in a miracle,—the whole world is a miracle, and exists in spite of thee! Go thy ways, man; search out truth in thine own fashion; but if it should elude thee, blame not the truth which ever is, but thine own witlessness which cannot grasp it!

BARAB-BAS



If a woman does anything out of the common in the way of art or literature, she is immediately judged by men as being probably without tenderness, without permanence in her work, and certainly without personal beauty. Now, as far as tenderness goes, a woman who thinks, who has read much and has studied human life in its various wonderful and often sad aspects, is far more able to realise the rareness and the worth of true love

THE
MURDER
OF
DELICIA

A woman's
intellect

THE
MURDER
OF
DELICIA

The woman
thinker

than the woman who has never thought or studied at all. She—the woman thinker—understands with full pathos the real necessity there is for being kind, patient, and forbearing one with the other, since at any moment Death may sever the closest ties and put an end to the happiest dreams; and in her love—if she does love—there must needs be far more force, truth, and passion than in the light emotion of the woman who lives for society alone, and flits from pleasure to pleasure like a kind of moth whose existence and feeling are but for a day. On the question of permanence in her work, she is the equal of man, as permanence in both ambition and attainment depends chiefly on temperament. A man's work or fame may be as unstable as that of any weak woman if he himself is unstable in nature. But put man and woman together,—start them both equally with a firm will and a resoluteness of endeavour, the woman's intellect will frequently outstrip the man's. The reason of this is that she has a quicker instinct and finer impulses.

IT is certain that the true intention of Woman's destiny has not yet been carried out. She is fighting towards it,—but, if I may venture to say so, she is using her weapons wildly and in various wrong directions. It is not by opposing herself to man that she can be his real helpmeet, neither is it by supporting him on her money, whether such money be earned or inherited. She will never make a true man of him that way. And it is not by adopting his pastimes or aping his manners. It is by cultivating and cherishing to the utmost every sweet and sacred sentiment of womanhood; every grace, every refinement, every beauty; by taking her share in the world's intellectual work with force, as well as with modesty, and by showing a faultless example of gentle reserve and delicate chastity. When she is like this, it is of course highly probable that she will be "murdered" often as "Delicia" was; but the death of many martyrs is necessary to the establishment of a new creed.

When man begins to understand that woman is not meant to be a toy

THE
MURDER
OF
DELICIA

Woman's
destiny

THE
MURDER
OF
DELICIA

or a drudge, but a comrade,—the closest, best, and truest that God has given him,—then the clouds will clear, and marriage will be a blessing instead of (as it too often proves) a curse; and there will be few, if any, "Delicias" to be slain, inasmuch as there will be few men left, so unworthy of their manhood as to play coward and traitor to the women who trust them.

Genius

"GENIUS is a big thing," she said; "I do not assume to possess it. But it is curious to see how very many quite ungifted men announce their claim to it, while indignantly denying all possibility of its endowment to women. However, one must have patience; it will take some time to break men of their old savagery. For centuries they treated women as slaves and cattle; it may take other centuries before they learn to treat them as their equals."

Titles

A HANDLE to one's name invariably attracts all the social "runaways," in the same fashion that mischievous street-boys are attracted

to bang at a particularly ornate and glittering door-knocker and then scamper off in hiding before any servant has time to answer the false summons. People who are of old and good family themselves think nothing of titles, but those who have neither good birth, breeding, nor education, attach a vast amount of importance to these placards of rank, and can never refrain from an awestricken expression of countenance when introduced to a duke, or withhold the regulation "royalty-dip" when in the presence of some foreign "princess," who, as a matter of fact, has no right to "royalty" honours at all.

LITERATURE can add honour to the peerage, but the peerage can never add honour to Literature—not, at any rate, to what I understand as Literature.

Literature

"POWER!" replied Delicia, closing her small, white hand slowly and firmly, as though she held the sceptre of an empire in its grasp. "The power to make men and women

Power

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think, hope, and achieve; the power to draw tears from the eyes, smiles from the lips of thousands; the power to make tyrants tremble, and unseat false judges in authority; the power to strip hypocrisy of its seeming fair disguise, and to brand liars with their name writ large for all the world to see!"

Honesty

A DOG may be honest without offence to the world in general, but a man must never be honest, unless he wishes to be considered a fool or a madman, or both.

The liver

"YOU should never ruffle the temper of a man who has liver complaint, Valdis," said Dr. Dalley, cheerfully, drawing his chair up to the table where the handsome actor still leaned. "All evil humours come from the troubles of that important organ, and I am sure, if I could only meet a would-be murderer in time, I could save him from the committal of his intended wicked deed in a dose — quite a small dose — of suitable medicine!"

“O H men, what were you made for ?” she demanded, half aloud. “To be masters of the planet ? Then surely your mastership should be characterised by truth and nobility, not vileness and fraud ! Surely God originally intended you for better things than to trample under your feet all the weak and helpless, to work ravage on the fairest scenes in nature, and to make miserable wrecks of all the women that love you ! Yes, Antinous, I can read in your sculptured face the supreme Egotism of manhood, an Egotism which fate will avenge in its own good time ! No wonder so few men are real Christians ; it is too sublime and spiritual a creed for the male nature, which is a composition of wild beast and intellectual pagan. Now, what shall be my course of action ? Shall I, Delicia, seeing my husband in the mud, go down into the mud also ? Or shall I keep clean—not only clean in body but clean in mind ? Clean from meanness, clean from falsehood, clean from spite, not only for his sake, but for the sake of my own self-respect ?

The
egotism of
manhood

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Shall I let things take their course until they culminate of themselves in the pre-ordained catastrophe that always follows evil? Yes, I think I will! Life after all is a shadow; and love, what is it?" She sighed and shuddered. "Less than a shadow, perchance; but there is something in me which must outlast both life and love—something which is the real Delicia, who must hereafter answer to a Supreme Judge for the thoughts which have elevated or degraded her soul!"

Philosophy

"I HAVE been reading philosophy," she answered him, with a tremulous little laugh. "Grim old cynics, both ancient and modern, who say that nothing lasts on earth, and that the human soul is made of such perishable stuff that it is always out-reaching one emotion after another and striving to attain the highest perfection. If this be true, then even human love is poor and trifling compared to love divine!" Her eyes darkened with intensity of feeling. "At least, so say some of our sage

instructors ; and if it be indeed a fact that mortal things are but the passing shadow of immortal ones, it is natural enough that we should gradually outlive the temporal in our desire for the eternal."

NO human being, perhaps, is quite so sore and miserable as a man who is born with the instincts of a gentleman and yet conducts himself like a cad. There are many such tramps of a decayed and dying gentility amongst us—men with vague glimmerings of the ancient chivalry of their race lying dormant within them, who yet lack the force of will necessary to plan their lives resolutely out upon those old-fashioned but grand foundations known as truth and loyalty. Because it is "the thing" to talk slang, they pollute the noble English language with coarse expressions copied from stable conversation ; and because it is considered "swagger" to make love to other men's wives, they enter into the base form of vulgar intrigue almost as if it were a necessary point of dignity and an added grace to

Tramps of
gentility

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"Upper
class"
England

manhood. If we admit that men are the superior and stronger set, what a pitiable thing it is to note how little their moral forces assist in the elevation of woman, their tendency being to drag her down as low as possible! If she be unwedded, man does his best to compromise her; if he has married her, he frequently neglects her; if she be another's wife, he frequently tries to injure her reputation. This is "modern" morality, exhibited to us in countless varying phases every day, detailed every morning and evening in our newspapers, witnessed over and over again through every "season's" festivities; and this, combined with atheism, and an utter indifference as to the results of evil, is making of "upper class" England a something worse than pagan Rome was just before its fall. The safety of the country is with what we elect to call the "lower classes," who are educating themselves slowly but none the less surely; but who, it must be remembered, are not yet free from savagery,—the splendid brute savagery which breaks out in all great nations when

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aristocratic uncleanness and avarice have gone too far,—a savagery which threw itself panting and furious upon the treacherous Marie Antoinette of France, with her beauty, her wicked wantonness, her thoughtless extravagance and luxury, and her cruel contempt for the poor, and never loosened its fangs till it had dragged her haughty head to the level of the scaffold, there to receive the just punishment of selfishness and pride. For punishment must fall sooner or later on every wilful misuser of life's opportunities.

Logicians

Men are judged to be excellent logicians, superseding in that particular branch of knowledge all the feeble efforts of womankind; and undoubtedly they have a very peculiar form of arguing out excuses for their own vices, which must be acknowledged as exceedingly admirable.

Outward
bearing

Nothing can well be more foolish than to estimate a person's mental capacity by his or her outward bearing. A rapier is a thin, light weapon, but it can nevertheless kill;

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a nightingale has nothing to boast of in its plumage, but its singing surpasses that of all the other birds in creation. Only the purely barbaric mind judges things or individuals by surface appearances.

Poor love

POOR Love! Poor little, delicate moth! How soon a coarse touch will kill it—kill it hopelessly, so that it will never rise again! It is the only passion I think we possess that once dead, can never be resuscitated. Ambition is perennial, but Love!—it is the aloe flower that blossoms but once in a hundred years.

A hero

YOU poor little woman!" she said pityingly. "What a mistake you have made of it! You fancied that out of all the world of men you had won for yourself a hero,—a man whose nature was noble, whose disposition was chivalrous, whose tenderness and truth were never to be doubted! A protector and defender who, had any one presumed to slander you, would have struck the liar across the mouth and made him answer for

his insolence. Instead of this wonderful Marc Antony or Theseus of your imagination, what have you got? Don't be afraid, poor Delicia! I see your mouth trembling and your eyes filling with foolish tears—now that's all nonsense, you know! You must not shrink from the truth, my dear; and if God has chosen to take up your beautiful idol and break it in your sight, you must not begin to argue about it, or try to pick up the pieces and tell God He is wrong. Courage, Delicia! Face it out! What did you think you had won for a sure certainty out of all the flitting pageant of this world's illusions? A true heart,—a faithful lover,—and, as before said, a kind of Theseus in looks and bravery! But even Theseus deserted Ariadne, and in this case your hero has deserted you. Only what you have to realise, you deluded creature, is this—that he is not a hero at all—that he never was a hero! That is the hardest part, isn't it? To think that the god you have worshipped is no more than an 'officer and gentleman,' as a great many 'officers and gentlemen' go, who lives comfortably

Not a hero

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on your earnings, and spends the surplus money on the race-course, music-halls, and—La Marina ! Put off your rose-coloured spectacles, my dear, and look at him as he is. Don't be a little coward about it ! Yes, I know what you are saying over and over again in your own heart ; it is the old story, 'I loved him, oh, I loved him !' like the burden of a sentimental song. Of course you loved him,—how deeply,—how passionately,—how dearly,—you will never, never be able to express, even to yourself."

Conscience

IT is strange, but nevertheless true, despite all our latter-day efforts at the reasoning away of sentiment, that conscience is still so very much alive in some of us, that when a man of birth and good-breeding has, according to his own stock-phrase for indulgence in vicious amusements, "seen life," by spending his time in low company, he is frequently moved by a strong reaction,—so powerful as almost to create nausea, and put him in a very bad and petulant humour.

A just law!

O H just law! Made by men for themselves and their own convenience! The "cruelty" which robs an innocent woman of love, of confidence, of happiness at one blow, has no existence, according to masculine justice. She may have to endure wilful neglect, and to be the witness of the open intimacy of her husband with other women; but provided he does not beat her, or otherwise physically ill-use her, and continues to live with her in apparent union, while all the while she shrinks from his touch and resents his companionship as an outrage, she cannot be separated from him.

(*N.B.*—That is, by divorce).

"WHAT is it you have lost?" demanded the inward voice.
"Love? But what do you understand by love? The transitory gleam of light that falls upon a fleck of foam and passes? Or the eternal glory of a deepening day whose summer splendours shall not cease? All that is of the earth must perish; choose there-

Lost

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fore that which is of Heaven, and for which you were destined when God kindled first within your woman's soul the fires of aspiration and endeavour! Nature is unrolled before you like an open book; humanity, with all its sufferings, needs, and hopes, is here for you to help and comfort; self is a Nothing in what you have to do; your earthly good, your earthly love, your earthly hopes are as the idle wind in the countings of eternity! Sail by the compass of the Spirit of God within you; and haply out of darkness, light shall come!"

Alone

"IT is so hard!" she murmured. "So hard for a woman to be quite alone in the world! To work on, solitary, wearing a bitter laurel-crown that makes one's brow ache; to be deprived, for no fault of one's own, of all the kisses and endearments so freely bestowed on foolish, selfish, ungrateful, and frequently unchaste women—to be set apart in the cold Courts of Fame,—a white statue, with frozen lips and eyes staring down

the illimitable ways of Death—Oh God! is not an hour of love worth all this chill renown!"

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Notoriety

NOTORIETY is a warm, noisy thing—personified, it is like a fat, comfortable woman who comes into your rooms perspiring, laughing, talking, with all the gossip of the town at her tongue's end, who folds you in her arms whether you like it or not, and tells you you are a "dear," and wants to know where you get your gowns made and what you had for dinner—the very essence of broad and vulgar good humour! Fame is like a great white angel, who points you up to a cold, sparkling, solitary mountain-top away from the world, and bids you stay there alone, with the chill stars shining down on you. And people look up at you and pass; you are too far off for the clasp of friendship; you are too isolated for the caress of love; and your enemies, unable to touch you, stare insolently, smile, and cry aloud, 'So you have climbed to the summit at last! Well, much good may it do you! Stay

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Life

there, live there, and die there, as you must, alone for ever!"

"LIFE at best is such a little thing!" she said. "One wonders sometimes what it is all for! You see crowds of men and women rushing hither and thither, building this thing, destroying that, scheming, contriving, studying, fretting, working, courting, marrying; bringing up their children, and it is quite appalling to think that the same old road has been travelled over and over again since the very beginning! All through the Ptolemies and the Cæsars,—imagine! Exactly the same old monotonous course of human living and dying! What a waste it seems! Optimists say we have progressed; but then are we sure of that? And then one wants to know where the progression leads to; if we are going forward, what is the 'forward?' Myself, I think the great charm of life is love; without love life is really almost valueless, and surely not worth the trouble of preserving."

THE vultures of society can never understand any one loving the sweet savour of truth ; they only scent carrion. No man is true in their estimation, no woman pure ; and chastity is so far from being pleasing to them that they will not even believe it exists !

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Vultures

A HANDLE to one's name is a poor thing in comparison to the position of genius ; and that the greatest emperor ever crowned is less renowned throughout the nations than plain William Shakespeare, is as it should be, and serves as a witness of the eternal supremacy of truth and justice amid a world of shams.

Genius

IN the strange motley we call society, one of the chief rules is that if you know a truth you must never say it ; you must say something else, as near a lie as possible. For example, if you are aware, and everybody else is aware, that a lady of exalted title has outraged, or is outraging, every sense of decency and order in her social and private life, you must always say she

In society

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is one of the purest and most innocent creatures living. Of course, if she is a nobody, without rank at all, you are at liberty to give her poor name over to the dogs of slander to rend at will; but if she is a countess or a duchess, you must entirely condone her vulgar vices. Think of her title! Think of her family connections! Think of the manner in which her influence might be brought to bear on some little matter in which you personally have an interest.

Man

THERE is no degradation that can befall a woman which man will not excuse and condone; equally there is no elevation or honour she can win which he will not grudge and oppose with all the force of his nature! For man loves to hold a strangulation-grip on the neck of all creation, woman included; and the idea that woman should suddenly wrench herself out of his grasp and refuse to be either trapped like a hare, hunted like a fox, or shot like a bird, is a strange, new, and disagreeable experience for him. And very naturally he clings to the slave type of womanhood, and encourages the breed

of those who are willing to become dancers and toys of his "harem," for, if all women were to rise to the height of their true and capable dignity, where should he go to for his so-called "fun?"

"Unsexed"

WOMEN who will not become as dirt under a man's foot, to be trodden on first, then kicked aside, are generally termed "unsexed" because they will not lower themselves to the man's brute level. Nothing is more unnatural from a man's point of view than that a woman should have brains,—and with those brains make money and position often superior to his, and at any rate manage to be independent of him. What men prefer is that their wives should be the slaves of their humour, and receive a five-pound note with deep thankfulness whenever they can get it, shutting their eyes to the fact that people like "Marina" get twenty pounds to their five from the same quarter.

Dogs and
men

HONESTY is an ordinary quality in dogs, but it is exceptional in men. Dogs love and are faithful;

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A strange
world

men desire, and with possession are faithless! Yet men, so they say, are higher in the scale of creation than dogs. I do not understand this. If truth, fidelity, and devotion are virtues, then dogs are superior to men; if selfishness, cunning, and hypocrisy are virtues, then men are certainly superior to dogs! I cannot argue it out, being only a dog myself; but to me it seems a strange world." And truly it is a strange world to many of us, though perhaps the strangest and most incomprehensible part of the whole mystery is the perpetual sacrifice of the good to the bad, and the seeming continual triumph of conventional lies over central truths. But, after all, that triumph is only "seeming"; and the martyrdom of life and love endured by thousands of patiently - working, self - denying women will bring its own reward in the Hereafter, as well as its own terrific vengeance on the heads of the callous egotists among men who have tortured tender souls on the rack, or burnt them in the fire, making "living torches" of them, to throw light upon the wicked deeds done in the vast

arena of Sensualism and Materialism. Not a tear, not a heart-throb of one pure woman wronged shall escape the eyes of Eternal Justice, or fail to bring punishment upon the wrong-doer! This we may believe,—this we must believe,—else God Himself would be a demon and the world His Hell.



IN the days when there were no railways, and the immortal Byron wrote his "Childe Harold," it was customary to rate personal inconvenience lightly; the beautiful or historic scene was the attraction for the traveller, and not the arrangements made for his special form of digestive apparatus. Byron could sleep on the deck of a sailing vessel wrapped in his cloak and feel none the worse for it; his well-braced mind and aspiring spirit soared above all bodily discomforts; his thoughts were engrossed with the mighty teachings of time; he was able to lose himself in glorious reveries on the lessons of the past and the possi-

ZISKA

Byron

ZISKA

bilities of the future; the attitude of the inspired Thinker as well as Poet was his, and a crust of bread and cheese served him as sufficiently on his journeys among the then unspoilt valleys and mountains of Switzerland as the warm, greasy, indigestible fare of the elaborate *table-d'hôtes* at Lucerne and Interlaken serve us now. But we, in our "superior" condition, pooh-pooh the Byronic spirit of indifference to events and scorn of trifles,—we say it is "melodramatic," completely forgetting that our attitude towards ourselves and things in general is one of most pitiable bathos.

Nature

NATURE neither idealises nor transfigures itself; it is simply Nature and no more. Matter uncontrolled by Spirit is anything but ideal.

Egypt

"PART of your face is veiled. That is a cruelty to us all!"

She waived the compliment aside with a light gesture.

"IT was the fashion in ancient Egypt," she said. "Love in those old days was not what it is now,—one glance, one smile was sufficient to set the soul on fire and draw another soul towards it to consume together in the suddenly kindled flame! And women veiled their faces in youth, lest they should be deemed too prodigal of their charms; and in age they covered themselves still more closely, in order not to affront the Sun-God's fairness by their wrinkles."

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The veil

SOCIETY is founded upon Cloth —*i.e.*, man does adapt his manners very much to suit his clothes; and as the costume of the days of Louis Quinze or Louis Seize inspired graceful deportment and studied courtesy to women, so does the costume of our nineteenth century inspire brusque demeanour and curt forms of speech, which, however sincere, are not flattering to the fair sex.

Clothes

YOU overhear persons talking and you listen. Very well. It may chance that you hear yourself

Listening

ZISKA

abused. What then? Nothing can be so good for you as such abuse; the instruction given is twofold: it warns you against foes whom you have perhaps considered friends, and it tones down any overweening conceit you may have had concerning your own importance or ability. Listen to everything if you are wise—I always do.

A creed

IN my creed—for I have a creed— it is believed that those who have never taken the sacred name of Christ to their hearts, as a talisman of comfort and support, are left as it were in the vortex of uncertainties, tossed to and fro among many whirling and mighty forces, and haunted for ever by the phantoms of their own evil deeds. Till they learn and accept the truth of their marvellous Redemption, they are the prey of wicked spirits who tempt and lead them on to divers miseries. But when the great Name of Him who died upon the Cross is acknowledged, then it is found to be of that transfiguring nature which turns evil to good, and sometimes makes

angels out of fiends. Nevertheless, for the hardened reprobate and unbeliever the old laws suffice.

ZISKA

GREAT heavens! Among what terrific unseen forces we live! And in exact proportion to every man's arrogant denial of the "Divinity that shapes our ends," so will be measured out to him the revelation of the invisible.

Unseen
forces

ALL history from the very beginning is like a wonderful chain in which no link is ever really broken, and in which every part fits closely to the other part,—though why the chain should exist at all is a mystery we cannot solve.

History

THE past is as much a part of your present identity as the present, and the future, too, lies in you in embryo. The mystery of one man's life contains all mysteries, and if we could only understand it from its very beginnings we should find out the cause of all things, and the ultimate intention of creation.

Mysteries

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Woman's
love

Spirit

LOVE—love that endures silently and faithfully through the stress of trouble and the passing of years—love which sacrifices everything to the beloved and never changes or falters,—this is a divine passion which seldom or never sanctifies and inspires the life of a man. Women are not made of such base material; their love invariably springs first from the Ideal, not the Sensual, and if afterwards it develops into the sensual, it is through the rough and coarsening touch of man alone.

NOT the Body but the Spirit is the central secret of life,—not deeds, but thoughts, evolve creation. Death? That is a name merely; there is no death,—only a change into some other form of existence.

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